



Kensington & Chelsea NEWS

LWN

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- see pages 6 & 7



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● BIG PUSH IN NOTTING HILL FOR AUTISM AWARENESS

Lady Borwick calls for anti-bullying classes

KENSINGTON councillor and prospective MP Victoria Borwick is pressing for anti-bullying classes to be taught in all schools in London in order to change attitudes to autistic and disabled children.

Her call comes as the National Autism Society has revealed that 40 per cent of children with autism are bullied at school because classmates do not understand the condition.

Lady Borwick (pictured) – the former Deputy Major

● By LWN reporter
GEOFF BAKER

of London and the Conservative parliamentary candidate for Kensington – is aiming to stop bullying of autistic and other educational needs pupils by having Disabled Appreciation added to the curriculum for every school in the capital.

Her pioneering call for a grass-roots re-education programme comes amid shock findings that 20 per cent of young adults would cross the road to avoid talking to a disabled person.

And it coincides with a big push in Notting Hill this week – when popular Portobello market trader Terry Camm will lose her treasured 21-inch hair at a charity event held for better awareness of autism.

Lady Borwick has called on the whole community to support Terry's awareness event. She said: "This extraordinary gesture taken by Terry to help her nephew is a heart-warming example of what can be done to bring Autism to the public's attention."

"I call on everyone to come along to Terry's event on April 2nd at the Red Lemon Pub on All Saints Road. Terry's event coincides with National Autism Day and both are crucial in raising awareness of Autism to the general public."

Brave Terry has volunteered to be shorn in order to highlight the problem of bullying of autistic children in schools and to raise charity funds on National Autism Day.

The shaving will take place after 6 pm on Thursday (April 2nd) at The Red Lemon where a whole evening's entertainment with DJs and a raffle is being

organised to raise autism awareness.

"It is shocking to that more than 40 per cent of children with autism have been bullied at school and it is time to put a stop to this once and for all," said one of the event's organisers, Hocine Yacef of Ladbroke Grove.

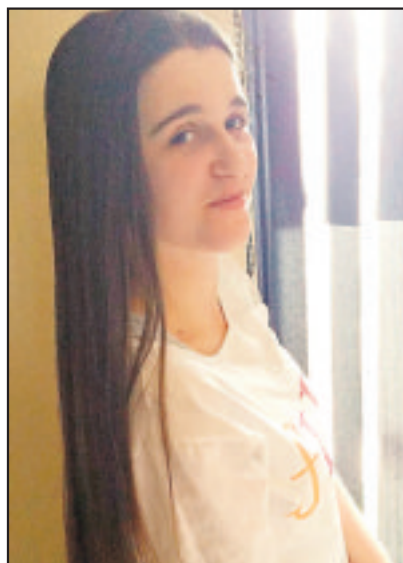
"Terry is an auntie to a beautiful young boy who suffers from autism. Not everybody understands the con-

dition and that 700,000 people in the UK live with autism. It's a hidden disability and you cannot always tell if somebody has it. However, although autism is incurable, the right support can make an enormous difference to people's lives."

"It is unfortunate that some people just see autism in terms of outbursts and tantrums. Terry has been out in public with her nephew when he has had an outburst and members of the public just look on with disgust and frowning. This is entirely due to them not being aware of autism and we need to better educate everyone."

Terry, whose long dark hair reaches all the way down

■ TURN TO PAGE 3



■ **GOING BALD:** Portobello market trader Terry Camm will have her 21-inch hair shaved off to raise funds for National Autism Day

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Sponsors sought for New Year's Eve

The Mayor of London and Jack Morton Worldwide have announced a unique three-year sponsorship opportunity for London's internationally acclaimed New Year's Eve celebrations.

The award-winning event offers brands the chance to connect with both the people of London and a huge global audience.

Last year's spectacular festivities were attended by 100,000 ticketed guests and attracted 161 million UK broadcast viewers, as well as an international audience in excess of one billion. It had high visibility across social media, including a Twitter reach of 87 million and over 100,000 YouTube video clips that received 271 million views.

Three-year sponsorship opportunities are now available, which will fully integrate brands into the multi-channel campaign, including title sponsor, supporting sponsor and ticket sponsor.

Last year saw London introduce ticketing for the first time, with the aim of managing crowd numbers, which had increased dra-



FROM THE
MAYOR'S
OFFICE

matically in recent years, to ensure crowd safety and improve the event experience for revellers. The event was highly successful, with all tickets sold and ticketholders enjoying guaranteed good views.

The event is being ticketed again this year, opening up further sponsor opportunities, such as ongoing communications to opted-in customers and full brand integration into the ticketing process and physical ticket. The public have already been enquiring about how to get tickets for this year's event and more information will be released this summer.

The Mayor of London Boris Johnson said:

"London's New Year's Eve celebrations are one of the biggest and best events in the world, enjoyed by millions of people, not just in London, but across the globe.

"This spectacular event is a superb opportunity to reach out to millions of people here and abroad, and to be associated with one of the most dynamic and forward looking cities on the planet."

Excitement across the world

Sponsorship partners will be following in the footsteps of Vodafone, which integrated the New Year's celebrations into its 'Firsts' campaign, introducing a multi-sensory experience to the firework extravaganza.

Jim Donald, Project Director, Jack Morton Worldwide, said: 'The sponsorship of the Mayor of London's New Year's Eve celebrations is an extraordinary opportunity. It puts a spotlight sharply on the City of London and provides rich potential for the kind of creativity and innovation that generates excitement across the globe. We are delighted to offer brands the opportunity to be part of this monumental event.'

London's New Year's Eve is a proven and

evolving property with unique engagement opportunities for brands. To discuss how this might add value to campaigns for 2015 and beyond brands should get in touch with Richard Vincent, Jack Morton Worldwide on 07770 756 466 or email sponsorship@jackmorton.co.uk.

Following a successful decade long partnership with the Mayor of London's Office, global brand experience agency Jack Morton were reappointed last year to create the eagerly anticipated annual experience, which takes place against the backdrop of London's distinctive skyline.

More details about the Mayor of London's New Year's Eve fireworks display will be announced in due course.

Ticketing was introduced for the first time in 2014. The aim was to manage crowd numbers and ensure the New Year's Eve celebrations' long term future as a safe and sustainable event. Crowds in central London on the night were reduced, which had a beneficial impact, not just on the event, but on transport infrastructure, reduced call outs for the emergency services and reduced numbers of arrests on Tube and rail services.



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Hate crime report is 'a cause for concern'

■ FROM PAGE ONE

her back, said she is going bald in order to prompt discussion of autism.

"I always wear a baseball cap at the market and I'm known for my cap. But I'm going to be completely shaved, with just the tiniest bit left on top, and then be on the market wearing no cap," said Terry, 27.

"My idea is that will prompt people to ask what happened to my hair and that way I can explain about autism and help people's awareness and understanding of it.

"I'm quite daunted about going bald, the last time I had my hair short was when I was thirteen. But I'm going to do it because this is a very important issue."

The problem of the public's perception of autism and other disabilities has been highlighted in Victoria Borwick's report on disability hate crime in the capital.

The report, on which action is anticipated soon by London Mayor Boris Johnson, recommends the introduction of new Disability Awareness classes in schools, to stop bullying and improve understanding.

"In their recent Attitudes to Disability survey, the charity Scope found that two-thirds of the British public find it difficult to speak to a disabled person," states the report.

"One-fifth of 18 to 34-year-olds were found to find the prospect of speaking to a disabled person so uncomfortable that they would choose to walk past that person.

"These findings demonstrate a lack of empathy towards disabled people, which may give rise to hostility toward them, often from a young age.

"These findings are cause for concern, highlighting the issues that disabled children may face growing up. One parent carer of a disabled child told us: 'Hate crime in schools is often passed off as bullying. If someone has any kind of Learning Disability, they are likely to be picked on. The gangs of youths abusing disabled people learn that it is okay to do so if they are allowed to get away with it in school.'"

Suffering in later life

The report concludes that lessons in disability education in all schools would help lessen the likelihood of autistic and other disabled children suffering in later life.

"A survey by the National Autistic Society displayed the disadvantaged position disabled people find themselves in - 44 per cent of those surveyed admitted that they stayed indoors as much as possible for fear of being harassed," says Lady Borwick's report.

port. Now Lady Borwick is pressing for change. "Schools in London ought to be engaging with disabled people and encouraging pupils to understand the potential impact of unkind words directed towards their disabled peers," says her GLA committee's report.

"We recommend that schools in London should show their pupils educational films regarding the impact of disability hate crime."

Katie Connolly, the Hammersmith co-organiser of Terry Camm's head-shaving event, said she was overwhelmed by local support from Notting Hill businesses and residents.

"The response has been immense, it's just snowballed," said Katie last week.

"All sorts of wonderful people and businesses have donated prizes for a raffle. Terry is aiming to raise £300 for the National Autistic Society and already people have pledged £165. It's fantastic that Terry is prepared to lose her lovely hair for the cause."

Readers who want to support Terry's close shave for autism can make donations at <https://www.justgiving.com/Tel-Camm> or text AUT187 to 70070.

Graham gets top planning position

THE Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has appointed Graham Stallwood Executive Director for Planning and Borough Development

This key post incorporates responsibility for planning policy, planning application decisions, conservation, building control, arboriculture and land charges.

Currently Head of Development Management and Conservation for the Royal Borough, he will replace Jonathan Bore and take up his new role later this year.

Since joining the council in November 2011, Mr Stallwood has led a range of improvements including:



- Creating a dynamic new Planning Enforcement team that takes on developers and contractors who ignore the rules
- Reducing turnaround times for planning applications and making the major application service the fastest in London
- Getting rid of a backlog of more than 600 overdue planning applications whilst dealing with a 60 per cent increase in workload
- Developing fully electronic working in the Planning Department
- Launching the new and highly popular pre-application advice service which helps to support the department's resources
- Expanding the Development Management and Conservation and Design teams.

the professional body for Chartered Town Planners, he is also a non-executive director of the Construction Industry Council, the representative forum for the professional bodies, research organisations and specialist business associations in the construction industry.

Mr Stallwood said: "I am honoured to have been appointed and am looking forward to serving the residents, businesses and visitors in my new role in this unique borough."

The Leader of the Royal Borough, Councillor Nick Paget-Brown, said: "With many planning decisions in Kensington and Chelsea, there is a very great deal at stake, both financially and in terms of quality of life."

"Mr Stallwood has made huge improvements to our services in his present role and his experience and knowledge will be invaluable in managing the enormous planning and development pressures faced by this most densely populated and desirable borough."

A trustee of the Royal Town Planning Institute,

Child homeless figures rocket

A FURIOUS charity chief is demanding a massive building drive of cheap homes after new figures have revealed that more than 70,000 homeless children are living in temporary accommodation in London.

The angry boss of the Shelter charity says he is appalled by the "madness" that so many children are being forced to share bathrooms with strangers and eat their meals off the floor.

New government figures released today show the rocketing rise of rented homes in the capital has left 36,730 homeless families in temporary accommodation.

"This is a staggering rise of 32% in three years," says Shelter.

The number of homeless children living in temporary accommodation - which includes emergency B&Bs and hostels - has shot up to 72,110, a rise of 8,500 from the 63,500 at the start of 2014.

LONDON WIDE

Shelter says the chronic shortage of affordable homes is making it harder for local councils to find homeless families somewhere stable to live.

"As a result, many families are being left in temporary accommodation, living in a constant state of limbo and unable to rebuild their lives", said a spokesman.

Mental health affected

"A recent investigation by Shelter uncovered the devastating impact that life in B&Bs and hostels is having on homeless children, with more than half of the 20 families interviewed saying their children's mental or emotional health had been affected.

"The growth of unstable and expensive private renting is also taking its toll, with the loss of a private tenancy now the single biggest cause of homelessness in London. Over 6,460 households were made homeless

after being evicted from a privately rented home in 2014, a rise of 11 per cent in a year".

Shelter is warning that unless politicians get to grips with the housing shortage and come up with a robust plan to build more genuinely affordable homes this situation will only get worse.

Shelter's chief executive Campbell Robb said: "It's appalling that our housing shortage has left thousands of homeless families hidden away in emergency B&Bs and hostels, often forced to live in cramped conditions, share bathrooms with strangers, and eat their meals on the floor.

"Every day we speak to homeless parents who are desperate to find a stable place to bring up their children, but with so few affordable homes being built and a safety net in tatters, instead many are ending up living in limbo in temporary accommodation.

"This madness has to end. When our housing shortage has created a crisis this deep there's only one way out, and that's for politicians to commit to building the affordable homes we desperately need."

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Residents' crime concerns

HOW best to tackle issues like hate crime, youth violence and vehicle theft were just some of the questions posed by Royal Borough residents to representatives from the council and local police at the Kensington and Chelsea Safer Neighbourhood Board's annual meeting.

More than 30 residents came to the Town Hall and took the opportunity to ask questions about crime and community safety. As well as concerns about violence, hate crime and vehicle theft other issues raised included disturbance from noisy bars. There were also questions about how the authorities and how the borough plans to respond to harmful practices such as female genital mutilation.

The audience heard from the police and Council about work being done by local voluntary and health organisations to deter youth crime and violence. Details were given about a project at St Mary's Hospital where youth workers talk to young people who have

By LWN Reporter

been injured as a result of crime. Important work is also being done by the police in local schools and youth clubs to get the message out about the true danger of carrying knives.

Practical advice on how a mechanical lock, such as a krooklok, can deter car thieves was also given.

Keeping the borough safe

The general feeling at the meeting was that residents are very grateful to the police and the council's Community Safety team for all their hard work in keeping the borough a safe place to live and although there are still issues that concern them they understand that efforts are being made to tackle these problems.

Residents were thanked for their attendance and questions. The police emphasised their reliance on information and intelligence from the public and urged people to report anything of concern, by calling the police on 101. Information can also be given anonymously to Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111. If a crime

is taking place or someone is in immediate danger, always call 999.

Member of the board, Cllr Joanna Gardner, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, IT and Corporate Services, said: "It was wonderful to see so many residents at the first ever Safer Neighbourhood Board Annual General Meeting on Saturday. The AGM provided an opportunity for residents to find out more about the work of the board which has just completed its first year in operation; how the borough is policed and what the Council and police are doing to tackle crime."

"The voice of our community matters - and the feedback the board receives means that our residents are helping to set local policing priorities and monitor police performance. This means resources can be targeted so issues of local concern can be tackled and our communities are involved with problem solving and crime prevention."

The Safer Neighbourhood Board will meet again in late July 2015, for more information and to attend go to www.kcsc.org.uk/network-forum/snb

A Right Royal Ride for all cyclists

CYCLISTS of all ages and abilities can get in the saddle for the Right Royal Ride

Organised by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the Kensington and Chelsea Foundation the event on Saturday, April 25th aims to raise funds for local mental health and well-being charities.

Anyone who can ride a bike is more than welcome to take part in the cycle, which starts in Holland Park at 11am. The route heads north towards the famous Portobello and Golborne Road Market, on to Little Wormwood Scrubs Park before returning to Holland Park at about 1pm.

Meanwhile from 10am to 3pm on the sports pitches in Holland Park there will be free family entertainment. Events and activities include performances on stage by Doc Bowling and his Blues Professors,

SMART's Band, Alexandra Berglof and the marvellous Sing to Live choir, compered by BBC London's Jumoke Fashola.

There will also be hands-on activities to try including Sew Portobello craft workshop, print-making with ACAVA, pedal-powered smoothie bike, children's play area and face painting and bike maintenance

Refreshments are available all day starting with breakfast at 10am.

To register for the event go to www.bikeminded.org Registration is £5 for adults and £3 for children (under 5s are free if parents bring them in child seats).

The ride will be marshalled by the police and a team of fully trained marshals.

For more info contact cycling@rbkc.gov.uk



NEWS FROM NICK ...

with Nicholas Paget-Brown, Leader of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

How Alan Johnson's sister became council tenant at 16

IN the febrile atmosphere of a general election campaign I have to be careful what I say, but anyway here goes: I rather like Alan Johnson, even though he is a Labour MP.

It's certainly true that I've never actually met him, but I have seen him on the telly and I have read *This Boy*, the superb first volume of his memoirs.

Johnson was born and bred in the North Kensington of the 1950s where life for some could be very hard indeed. Alan's father was a bit of a wrong'un who deserted his family, leaving Alan's mother struggling to support her two children with a variety of cleaning jobs and by scavenging for pieces of coal and scraps from Portobello market but tragically her efforts were hampered by the disabling heart condition that would kill her at just 42.

The heroine of the story is the author's sister, Linda. Through a string of part time jobs she supplemented the family income and paid down the family's debts. She nursed her ailing mother and took care of Alan, and all while still a school girl. Hers is a tale of extraordinary courage and fortitude. Indeed so impressed was the Royal Borough social worker sent in to consign Linda and Alan to children's homes on the death of their mother, that the council ended up throwing away its own rulebook and granting Linda a council tenancy and sole care of young Alan. She was 16 years old.

But the admiration went both ways with Alan Johnson describing his social worker, Mr Pepper, as an "an absolute hero" who fought to keep brother and sister together.

Anyway, on March 16th Alan was back on

his old North Ken stomping grounds to take part in world social work day and meet today's Mr and Ms Peppers. Amongst other things he shadowed them as they went about their business.

It's a good thing I think when a serious and credible figure like Johnson takes a positive interest in social work, rather than just waiting on the sidelines to stick the boot in when something goes wrong.

Catastrophic scale

And of course, things do from time to time do go wrong. When it is on a catastrophic institutional scale like Rotherham well then there has to be national soul searching, and

when it is at the individual case level, likewise we have to uncover what went wrong and learn the lessons. But we should always remember that social work with children generally starts in the most unpromising conditions, conditions of family distress, illness, bereavement, neglect and yes, sometimes even cruelty. It is social workers who try to protect the children, to

stop the family breaking, or, if it is too late, who pick up the pieces afterwards.

We must also remember that children's social work is a bit like an iceberg: nine tenths of it is never seen and that's where nearly all of the good work happens.

Thanks to effective social work uncounted numbers of children have gone on into adulthood, able to function and with a chance of achieving something of their potential. So it's a hugely important and worthwhile job, but it is also difficult and demanding, and to do it well requires some special qualities.

Like Alan Johnson, I think that from time to time, social workers deserve a little positive attention and by way of this article I want to do my bit to see that they get it.

It's a good thing I think when a serious and credible figure like Johnson takes a positive interest in social work, rather than just waiting on the sidelines to stick the boot in when something goes wrong

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Teen trafficking at epidemic levels

HUNDREDS – possibly thousands – of child prostitutes are being forcibly-smuggled into Westminster by callous criminals from Eastern Europe, West Africa and South East Asia who then make them suffer “appalling horrors”.

Children’s charity Barnardo’s is warning of an epidemic in teen trafficking and is calling on authorities to wake up to the scandal as gangsters are increasingly flooding the capital’s perversely market with helpless youngsters.

Latest figures show that more than 500 teenagers a year are known to be smuggled in by sex traders – but the charity admits “we are only scratching the surface of the problem” and many more slave children are being slipped under the net and forced to live in misery hundreds of miles from home.

The charity revealed that only a tiny fraction of the sex slaves aged as young as 15 are on their rescue radar.

Hidden victims

“Since 2012, Barnardo’s specialist London team has helped 40 trafficked children and young people – but it is thought that there are hundreds more hidden victims in the capital,” said a spokesman.

“There were 549 estimated cases of potentially trafficked children in 2012, though it is thought that this number is likely to be far higher due to the hidden nature of this crime.

“Statistics show that girls are more likely to be trafficked than boys and that children are most commonly-trafficked from South East Asia, West Africa and Eastern Europe.

“Children are most commonly exploited by criminal gangs for sexual purposes, and made to carry out forced labour or criminal activity or held in servitude.”

Lynn Gradwell, Director of Barnardo’s in London, said: “The victims of modern day trafficking are

● By LWN reporter GEOFF BAKER

forced to endure appalling horrors. Sexual exploitation, forced labour and violence are common to many of the cases that our workers handle each day.

“Barnardo’s is one of the only organisations to confront these issues head-on, providing one to one emotional and practical support to trafficked young people and providing important training to other agencies.

“We know that there are many trafficked children London who are extremely vulnerable and in desperate need of help.

“Those in authority need to recognise the scale of the problem and work with us to identify and protect more young victims.”

But the number of victims identified is expected to rise further as Barnardo’s works to raise awareness and provide training to social workers, council teams, the Metropolitan Police and other agencies for how to spot the sex slaves.

Barnardo’s is working with the Met on Operation Makesafe, a new police campaign in Westminster and all London boroughs designed to put taxi drivers and hotel staff on the look-out for signs of child sexual exploitation.

“Operation Makesafe is an initiative to identify potential victims of child sexual exploitation and to deploy police officers to intervene before any harm occurs to the young person,” said a Met spokesman.

Awareness training

“This initiative is now being rolled out across all London boroughs following a pilot initiative in Waltham Forest. Businesses such as hotels, licensed premises and taxi companies are being given awareness training on what signs to look out for and what action they must take should they see suspicious behavior or activity on their premises or in their vehicles.

“If cabbies or hotel staff have suspicions we want them to dial 101 and quote Operation Makesafe. Our call handlers have all been trained to recognise calls relating to child sexual exploitation and they will provide the appropriate advice and police response.”

Anyone who suspects child slaving can also contact Barnardo’s Child Trafficking Advocacy Service in confidence on 0800 043 4303 or email CTA@barnardos.org.uk.

● EASTER JOY AT PIMLICO DAY CENTRE



■ ELDERLY visitors at the Pullen Day Care centre in Pimlico were treated to a day of song, dance and Easter eggs as part of a Share the Miracle Easter initiative to spread kindness in the community.

Westminster City Council joined in spreading the goodwill as 500 Easter eggs were distributed to care homes and day care centres throughout the borough.

Children from St Barnabus Primary school choir sang songs for the elderly visitors and then presented them with their Easter eggs and a card from Westminster Council.



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Nearly 2,000 young sailors entertain the Countess of Wessex in a musical battle



SOPHIE Countess of Wessex and almost 2,000 children shared a magical day at Cadogan Hall in Chelsea this week.

The hall was awash with sea shanties as the young performers took part in The Battle of Trafalgar, an exciting, musical re-enactment of the famous battle, presented in dramatic form.

Dressed in sailor gear the children, from their seats in the audience, played the part of two ships' companies, HMS Victory and Royal Sovereign, singing in unison and counterpoint. They were accompanied by The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the concert featured dancers from Central School of Ballet. Nelson in person (played by David Leonard) narrated the story.

David Lyon's evocative music and Teresa Colard's scrupulously researched script excitingly re-created the events leading up to the historic battle, culminating in Nelson's death and funeral.

Hilary Davan Wetton, conductor, kept a firm grip on the battle plan. He is best known for his Masterclass series on Classic FM and Play it Again series on BBC 1, when he taught Jo

■ NEARLY 2,000 young performers took to the stage in the Cadogan Hall in Chelsea to present a musical version of the Battle of Trafalgar accompanied by The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. The performers were delighted to be watched by Sophie Countess of Wessex



■ FROM page 6

Brand to play the organ. He has a fistful of awards for the recordings of mainly neglected English composers that he has conducted with major London orchestras. His core belief for the Classical Road Show productions is that children learn best through participation, gaining in self esteem as they learn to love music and the inspiring sound of a live symphony orchestra.



■ LORD Nelson, alias David Leonard



■ SOPHIE Countess of Wessex in the audience enjoying the production with The Lord Lieutenant of Greater London Sir David Brewer. Below the Countess chats to some of the performers



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LWN

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER & PIMLICO

9,000 youngsters vote for their new Youth MP

MORE than 9,000 young people stood up to get the voice of young people heard this week as they voted in this year's new Youth MP and Deputy Youth MP for Westminster.

Six ambitious young Westminster Youth Council members have been campaigning across the city to represent the views of young people, in a tightly contested race with the winner announced on Monday.

Aby Murray, 15, from St. Marylebone School, will be the new Youth MP and Enkuush Mergen, 16, who attends The Camden School for Girls, took the Deputy Youth MP spot, at an event hosted by the Lord Mayor of Westminster on Monday of last week.

The Westminster Youth Elections 2015 saw the highest number yet of young people head to the polls to vote, beating last year's record by thousands.

This year the six young candidates campaigned across schools, youth groups and their local area, acting on issues such as help getting into work, crime and the chance for all young people to achieve what they want to. Aby and Enkuush will now act as the voice of young people, and will work directly with key decision makers to influence and shape local services for young people.



■ VOTED IN: Westminster's new Youth MP Aby Murray pictured with her deputy, Enkuush Mergen and the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Cllr Audrey Lewis

Aby, said: "I stood because I wanted to make a change in the services available to young people and introduce a life skills programme for teens, and a campaign offering teens non-judgemental advice on drugs to mental health. I have so much admiration for all the young people who got involved and voted, they have shown they want to have a say."

Enkuush, added: "I am so excited for the year ahead. I want there to be more support for young people and I plan to launch an online blog as a platform where

young people can visit to share skills, opportunities and questions about getting into work and moving into further education."

The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Cllr Audrey Lewis, said: "I would like to congratulate all of our candidates - it's just wonderful to see so many young people engage with local politics. It is so important that they feel their voice is being heard and the new Youth MP and Deputy Youth MP now have a unique opportunity to make a real difference to issues affecting young people in Westminster."

Writing for the **London Weekly News** every week, London's most outspoken entrepreneur

Charlie Pipes Up!



Those not paying the minimum wage should be put in the stocks!

A FEW weeks ago I read that the next series of Benefits Street is going to be back on our screens soon, and it got my blood boiling.

We have to stop celebrating the culture of state-funded worklessness if we're ever going to break the cycle that sees people leave school and never get close to employment.

The problem is, for all the efforts being made in this direction by charities and businesses alike, there are still a few firms out there exploiting people and making claiming benefits more attractive, and financially rewarding, than working.

I was staggered to discover there are still firms out there, including some well-known names, which were still failing to pay the National Minimum Wage.

Most recently, 37 were named and shamed, which is a good thing, because any business who pays their people less than the minimum deserves to be put in the stocks and have their bad practices exposed.

And does anyone really believe major firms like retailer H&M and Welcome Break, the service station operator, when they said that staff were paid below the minimum wage as a result of H&M's "time logging errors" and Welcome Break's "IT problems"?

Seriously, if company bosses are struggling to work out an hourly rate on a calculator, you have to wonder how they manage to guide multi-million pound operations to ring up large profits.

I'm sure they'd pay much more attention if, instead of the paltry £51,000 fine these 37

firms received, their CEOs got a 12-month stretch at Her Majesty's pleasure.

I do think it's great that the government is attempting to crack down on businesses who fail to pay a minimum of £6.50 an hour to any staff aged over 21. But the fines of just £1,400 for each of the businesses in question are pathetic - especially when some are making literally billions of pounds a year.

I was staggered to discover there are still firms out there, including some well-known names, which were still failing to pay the National Minimum Wage

The fact that these businesses have been named, shamed and reputations muddled probably does them more damage than any financial penalty.

However I'm eagerly awaiting the government's proposed Small Business Bill, which will increase the level of fines to up to £20,000 and will be based on the number of employees underpaid. It's vital these rogue employers are held to account.

As a patron for The Princes Trust and a responsible employer, I have made it my mission over the last few years to get people off benefits and back into the work place.

The government have put a huge amount of resource into this. Businesses that avoid paying the minimum wage are undoing all that hard work, because what incentive do our young people have to go out and get a job when their employers rip them off and they are underpaid?

In our country there are millions who are officially in poverty, and what's making it even more shocking is that more than half of those people are in work.

For me, if you go to work every day you deserve a decent reward - no exceptions!

Views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of this newspaper



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LWN

LONDON WIDE

Get back to the garden!

GARDENERS of all levels are being encouraged by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) to come out of winter hibernation and celebrate the floral splendour of spring with three different RHS London Shows throughout April.

European Orchid Show & Conference, April 9th-12th

The Royal Horticultural Halls will be filled with orchid displays by some of the world's finest orchid growers, orchid societies and botanical gardens as London and the RHS host the 17th European Orchid Show & Conference.

The show provides an opportunity to admire thousands of orchids and marvel at their astonishing shapes, colours and scents. Visitors will be able to purchase some highly collectible and new species.

A Preview Evening of awards, refreshments



The RHS Great London Plant Fair

and live music will be held on Wednesday, April 8th.

RHS Great London Plant Fair, April 14th – 15th

From orchids to a show bursting with many late-spring plant selections, the RHS Great London Plant Fair, also in the RHS Halls offers fantastic displays of spring colour and scent alongside a vast range of seeds, plants, flowers and seasonal goods available to purchase from leading nurseries, tradestands and growers.

A highlight at this year's show will be a garden designed by the

finalists for this year's RHS Young Designer of the Year ahead of their design debut at RHS Flower Show Tatton Park in July.

The three candidates have been set a group challenge by the RHS to work together and build a front garden suitable for parking a car but also a practical and attractive outdoor living space. The garden will demonstrate how these spaces can be used to benefit the environment, reduce flood risk and increase biodiversity. Principal horticultural advisor Leigh Hunt will be on hand to offer inspired

visitors advice on how to use their front garden spaces.

Other highlights include a full programme of talks from how to grow your own cocktails and spring foraging to reimagining London as a National Park and the importance of front gardens in the modern city.

For those who want to get creative at the show, The Secret Adventurer's Club will be running workshops on how to create your own birdfeeder.

The Royal Watercolour Society will also be displaying beautiful artwork reflecting the changing seasons and the life of the four RHS Gardens with its 'Cultivation and Creativity' exhibit.

For those who can't make the show during the day an elegant English Garden Party will take place in the Lindley Hall on the evening of April 14th. Visitors will have the chance to celebrate the arrival of spring in style and enjoy the show complete with live music, mouthwatering local and seasonal British produce from The Sunday Kitchen, unusual and in-

teresting beers and ciders from microbreweries and seasonal floral cocktails from the Midnight Apothecary.

The Lawrence Hall will remain open in the evening for late-night shopping.

RHS London Alpine Garden Show, 26 April 26th

Completing the RHS London Show programme in April is the Alpine Garden Show in association with the Alpine Garden Society on Sunday April 26th. Held in the RHS Lindley Hall, the show will provide a rare opportunity to admire and purchase from an outstanding and diverse range of alpine plants.

Visitors will have the opportunity to gain expert advice from alpine growers and watch hands-on demonstrations. This year's show has a focus on mountains and plant hunting with talks throughout the day.

For more information on any of the RHS Show please visit www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events

The ultimate Easter bunny?

YOUR dentist might have a fit, but for those who want to truly treat their child with the ultimate chocolate Easter bunny this year, how about one selling in Camden that has 584,000 calories?

The 11lb bunny is 14 inches tall and packs enough calories to meet a seven-year-old's recommended daily allowance for 54 weeks – or just one extremely-hyperactive Easter Sunday.

Parents keen to buy the bunny might want to monitor the eating of it in case a young child cracks her teeth – as the chocolate rabbit's eyes are solitaire diamonds worth £25,000.

The £33,000 Easter Bunny is on sale through purveyors of super-prime gifts Very First To of Stucley Street, NW1. The rabbit has been hand

carved from 75 per cent Tanzania chocolate by award-winning chocolatier and former Chef Décor of Harrods, Martin Chiffers, and took two days to make.

The diamonds have been selected by luxury jeweller 77 Diamonds of

Mayfair's Hanover Square. Once the bunny has been eaten, 77 Diamonds will set the gemstones in a bespoke piece of jewellery free of charge.

"Don't worry if you don't think your waistline could withstand the calories, the decadent delight can be displayed for two years, as long as the temperature is regulated to around 16 degrees," said a spokesman for Very First To.

Alternatively, dedicated chocolate addicts could take their £33,000 to Baker Ross of Walthamstow, where the cash would buy 1,100 of the Baker Ross tubs of mini Easter bunnies. Each tub contains 140 bunnies – giving your child 154,000 in total, or 421 a day every day for a year.



Act your age! In a community play

THEATRE director and playwright Rosalind Scanlon is leading a series of drama workshops for more mature women to create a new Community History Play.

The play will be based on the lives of 'The Sugar Girls' who worked in Hammersmith's sugar factory and the women who worked in the J. Lyons's Cake Factory, on Hammersmith Road.

No previous acting experience is required and the drama project is open to all women aged 50 plus.

Workshops take place on Tuesday afternoons from 1.30-3.30pm at The Macbeth Centre, Macbeth Street, Hammersmith W6 9JJ and there is a cost for each term of £30/£19 (H&F Conc Res.).

For more information call Rosalind on 07742320001 or to enrol call 0845 839 7912: (quote course code AW3500).. This project is part of The Age Well Programme at The Macbeth Centre.



WIN TICKETS TO SEE PAUL McCARTNEY

MACCA is bringing his Out There tour to the O2 and the London Weekly News has a pair of tickets to give away.

The tickets are for Paul McCartney's O2 show on Sunday May 24th.

For your chance to win a night at the gig of the year, simply answer this question and email your answer to: competitions

@londonweeklynews.co.uk (Don't forget to include your name and phone number).

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New head at Ark Swift

HELPING children to realise their dreams and "shape the modern world" are the ambitious aims of the new headteacher at a White City school.

Christopher Greenhall laid out his mission statement after taking over the reins at Ark Swift Primary Academy last week.

An experienced educator and senior leader, Mr Greenhall was previously Head of School at Southlands Lower School and Deputy Headteacher at Holmemead Middle School, both in Bedfordshire.

"I am delighted and proud to be new headteacher of Ark Swift, a fantastic school on a journey to excellence," he said.

"Our school vision is 'dream, believe, achieve' – and I look forward to working with pupils, parents and staff to help our young people to do just that.

"Ark Swift is a close-knit school community and, together, we will achieve excellence, helping our pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and character to not just excel in the modern world, but to help shape it for the better".

The appointment marks the latest development in an exciting new era for the school, which recently unveiled Damian McBeath as Executive Headteacher.

Mr McBeath is also Executive Headteacher of the nearby Ark



DELIGHTED: Christopher Greenhall is Ark Swift's new headteacher

Conway and Ark Bentworth Primary Academies.

And the partnership will allow all three schools to benefit from greater shared learning and collaboration, improving the education experience for families across the community.

"The biggest transformation taking place in White City is in the mind-set of our pupils. There is a genuine sense that anything is possible and we embrace that," said Mr McBeath.

"The appointment of Mr Greenhall as Headteacher is a significant step towards the world-class education our children deserve.

"Chris is a great leader with a huge amount of experience in local, national and international education initiatives."

The Vaughan's centenary concert

AN Easter Concert at St James's, Spanish Place formed part of the Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School's celebrations of their centenary.

The Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School choir was joined by the Cantus Ensemble and the Belgravia Chamber Orchestra to perform Sir Edward Elgar's The Dream of Gerontius in the centenary concert.

Old Vaughanian Peter Davoren sang the role of Gerontius, alongside mezzosoprano Diana Moore and bass David Soar as the Angel and the Priest. Often considered Edward Elgar's finest work – and perhaps even the greatest of all oratorios – Elgar dedicated The Dream of Gerontius 'A.M.D.G.' – 'to the greater glory of God'.

Scott Price, director of music at Cardinal Vaughan, said: "It has been a great pleasure to teach the boys and girls this magnificent score



THE Vaughan's Easter centenary concert at St James, Spanish Place

over the past few months and it was a real honour to be able to work yesterday with such wonderful soloists.

Especially lovely was that Peter Davoren is a former pupil and that he was singing the role of Gerontius for the first time. The work is such a huge undertaking, running for nearly two hours, but everyone rose to the challenge magnificently

and the concert really was a milestone in the music-making at the Vaughan."

The Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School has a long tradition of singing and the school's choirs regularly appear at London's major churches and concert halls. This concert was the Vaughan's first collaboration with the Cantus Ensemble, one of Lon-

don's leading chamber choirs.

On Wednesday, April 29th, the school will again be working for the first time with exciting period instrument group Spiritato! The concert will be held at 7.30pm at St John's, Smith Square with a programme of music from the 17th and 18th centuries by one of the leading singers of our day,

counter tenor Iestyn Davies. Tickets are available online at www.sjss.org.uk

The Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School would like to thank Father Christopher Colven, Rector of St James's, Spanish Place for again granting the school permission to perform in this magnificent church.

Pimlico Academy students take top spots in business challenge

PIMLICO Academy students took first and second prize in the first Rabobank Business Challenge.

The Business Challenge was set up in conjunction with The Brokerage Citylink and involved students from Pimlico Academy, Westminster and Sacred Heart in Southwark.

Over nine weeks, students had weekly meetings with their designated mentors with the final challenge being to produce and give a presentation on a subject that they felt passionate about.

As part of the preparation Rabobank provided the students with a training session on presentation skills, delivered by one of the leading experts in this field.

The winner of the competition was Amir Amini for his presentation on 'Plastics in the Ocean'.

Judges said he was a clear winner with his knowledgeable presenting style and excellent accompanying slides. They also found his argument extremely persuasive. His prize was an iPad mini and two weeks work experience at the bank.

Aida Boriqi came second for her delivery on the inequality in society and how that relates to educational outcomes. Judges commented on the powerful and thought-provoking evidence in her presentation. She won two weeks' work experience at the firm.

The Pimlico students are pictured enjoying the graduation celebration on the roof of Rabobank's offices in the City. Left to right Amir Amini, Sajid Rahman, Yasmin Gordon, Kamaal Annafi and Aida Boriqi.



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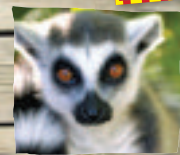
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LONDON WEEKLY NEWS

LONDON WIDE

Mayor appoints new deputy to succeed Lady Borwick

THE Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, has confirmed the appointment of Roger Evans AM as London's new Statutory Deputy Mayor, following the decision of Lady Victoria Borwick to step down from the role having been chosen as a prospective parliamentary candidate for Kensington.

Mr Evans (pictured) will take up his new role when his term as chairman of the London Assembly expires on May 13th 2015. Victoria Borwick will officially step down as Deputy Mayor at the London Assembly AGM on the same day.

Welcoming Mr Evans to his new role the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, said: "I'm delighted Roger has accepted this challenge. The role of Statutory Deputy Mayor involves hard work, dedication and selfless commitment to London. It's about representing the Mayorality at hundreds of events and gatherings

across every London Borough throughout the year, feeding back Londoners' concerns and ideas, and communicating my vision for the greatest city on earth.

"Over the last three years Victoria has made the role her own, delivering tirelessly for London, for Londoners and for me. I'm enormously grateful to her, and confident Roger will take over the baton with equal dedication and drive, as we seek to continue to bring the jobs, housing and transport infrastructure we need to equip London for the next 50 years."

Delighted

Commenting on his appointment Roger Evans said: "I am delighted to be taking on this role and I am looking forward to building on the fantastic work that Victoria has done over the last three years.

"Since I arrived at King's Cross in 1987 our city has changed and improved beyond recognition. In particular the last seven years under Boris Johnson have seen falling crime, improvements to public transport and impressive new projects culminating in the stunning Olympic Games. This is a great time to be a Lon-

doner. For so many people London is a city of opportunities – a city of dreams. There is nowhere else like London – it is a great privilege to play a part in leading our city."

In her resignation letter to the Mayor Victoria Borwick wrote: "I want to thank you for all the fantastic opportunities you have given me as your Deputy Mayor. I have relished the range of interesting projects that you have enabled me to take on, to make a positive contribution to all the great work that you have done for London."

Between now and May 13th Victoria Borwick will continue to discharge her duties as Deputy Mayor.

● Roger Evans was born in Lancashire in 1964 and has lived in London for nearly 30 years.

A trained barrister, Mr Evans worked for many years for Royal Mail, and has represented Havering and Redbridge on the London Assembly since 2000. He's a former leader of the Conservative Group on Waltham Forest Council, a former leader of the Conservative group on the London Assembly, and is the current Chairman of the Assembly. He lives in Romford.



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Life in Notting Hill

by Amanda Waggott

from Notting Hill Post

www.nottinghillpost.com

WHERE can you enjoy a fry up, buy a travel book, have a tattoo, stock up on spices, savour a delicious home cooked lunch, choose a treat for the kids, place a bet, select a wedding present, dream over handmade chocolates, rummage around a ribbon store, collapse into a cocktail bar before buying popcorn on your way home? The answer is the very short, dynamic stretch of Blenheim Crescent between Kensington Park Road and Portobello Road. Oh and you can also buy fish. To me this small curve of crescent sums up the wonderful mix you find in Notting Hill, and even though it has changed over the years, it is still one hundred per cent eclectic.

BEFORE you start your retail gamut, stop and admire the vibrant tribute mural of Joe Strummer, lead singer from The Clash who died in 2002. It reads, "Without people you're nothing" a latter day quote from the musician. It adorns a wall donated by Lyndons haberdashers on the South East corner and was unveiled in 2013.

NEXT to the mural is the Spice Shop, number 1 Blenheim Crescent. As all good things in Notting Hill this started life as a stall back in 1990. Founder Brigit Erath was studying for an International Business Degree and needed to supplement her income. The Spice Stall was such a huge success it became the Spice Shop in 1995. Now you will find over 2,500 spicy products in this small Aladdin's cave as well as recipes and spice advice.

ACROSS the Road is Cooks for Books, for me a true jewel in the Blenheim Crescent crown and one that has been glittering since 1983. This bookshop is literally crammed with foodie tomes; there is barely space for the till. It is not just the books that draw the customers; arrive mid morning and you are lured by the most mouthwatering aroma wafting from the test kitchen at the back. You need to be there by 11.45am to get one of the few tables, which are squeezed in among the books. Then for just £5 for two courses or £7 for three – Tuesday to Friday on Saturday there is just one course – you can test what has been tried that day.

NEXT Drop into the brightly coloured Ceramica Blue set up by local Lindy Wiffen in 1987. Her shop motto is to sell "practical items with character for your table and kitchen, for you to use and cherish". This is a great place for presents, you can buy all your cups, saucers and plates here and they have a Wedding List service with 8% off the total for the happy couple to buy something frivolous. Wiffen's taste is not uniform so you can browse through handmade English walnut cheese boards, brightly coloured silicone kitchen utensils, vivid Spanish recycled glass tableware, stemware from French glassmakers dating from the 15th century, Colombian ceramic cookware and Swedish linen.

TOYSHOPS are few and far between around the Portobello making the children's paradise that is Honeyjam very popular. Owned by the glorious Jasmine Guinness (Jam) and Honey Bowdrey (Honey) it was set up in 2006 – though originally on the Portobello Road. Local ankle biters are enticed though its doors by a pocket money strip down the middle filled with brightly shaped objects that you can bounce squeeze or fire. Tourists often find themselves on Blenheim Crescent in search of the Travel Bookshop made famous by the film Notting Hill. In 2011 owners of the Book Warehouse and W11 locals the Malin brothers saved the shop from closure but were unable to keep the Travel moniker. Esprit in tact the shop now trades as the Notting Hill Bookshop and specializes in travel books while promising not to stock cook books in deference to Books for Cooks opposite. Tourists and many locals don't seem to have noticed the change so the shop still attracts attention from the masses and keeps the Crescent lively.

SUMMING up this collection, and I haven't even touched on half of what is there, I would say "To be without Blenheim Crescent, Notting Hill would be nothing" – I am sure Joe Strummer would have agreed.

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London WEEKLY News

ISSUE 16

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Thursday, April 2nd 2015

Americans vying to dine like the Queen



■ HM The Queen hosting a banquet for the leaders of the 53 Commonwealth nations.

Photo by Tim Rooke/REX

Buckingham Palace cookbook starts a craze for dinner parties serving only the finest of food

By Geoff Baker

TURN to page 3

A ROYAL family cookbook which reveals what The Queen likes to serve her dinner guests has started a new upper-class craze in America – for Superma'am Parties.

The foodie fad has become all the rage with monarchy-obsessed posh Americans vying to impress their guests with menus straight from Buckingham Palace.

Superma'am Parties have become the new thing with wives of hedge-fund managers and the banking elite.

The chic parties – where guests are expected to arrive in a Bentley wearing their best diamonds and tiaras – began after the publication last year of "A Royal Cookbook: Seasonal Recipes From Buckingham Palace".

The book is the first cookbook to have been created by the Royal Household. It was written by Mark Flanagan, Royal Chef to The Queen, and Edward Griffiths, Deputy Master of the Royal Household.

The cookbook promises "a selection of the authentic menus prepared and served for guests of Her Majesty The Queen carefully chosen for you to recreate at home".

When the book was published some amateur

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**Inside London's
new weekly**

**Duchess of
Cambridge
continues her
support for
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Westminster & Pimlico News (established 1857)

◆ Chelsea News (established 1857)

◆ Kensington News (established 1869)

THE paper serving ROYAL London

ROYAL LONDON

Royal recipe book starts and American craze

Jet set Americans dining like royals

FROM page 1

cooks complained that many of the ingredients were out of the reach of the average American. But the super-rich for whom any ingredients are no object have leapt on it and it now takes pride of place in the kitchens of the most expensive homes.

Unlike most cookbooks, 'A Royal Cookbook' does not contain dozens of recipes; in fact there are only 13.

But for the ladies who lunch of New York's Upper East Side and other prime US locations, it's the ideal cookbook for their swish banquets.

"The Royal Cookbook has really taken off with the high-fliers in the States," said one observer of American high society.

"They love it that they're eating just like the royals with dishes like Eggs Drumkilbo, which apparently was a favourite of the late Queen Mother – it's the royal family's version of prawn cocktail, but made with lobster and chopped up eggs.

"Superma'am Parties have become the private jet set's equivalent of the average American's Superbowl Parties, only the ingredients are a lot more expensive than beer and potato chips and a lot harder to find – Balmoral venison isn't easily available in the States.

"But it's the exclusivity and luxury of the ingredients that is making these parties so popular. Of course you need your own private chef to make the meals just so, but that's no problem with this crowd as they are not the sort that cook their own beans on toast.

"It's the appeal of doing something so utterly royal

which captivates Americans. As our President told Prince Charles during his visit last week, we like the Royal Family more than we do our own politicians."

After champagne aperitifs – or a Zaza, The Queen's favourite cocktail of Plymouth gin and Dubonnet – a typical menu for a Superma'am Party – taken straight from the Royal Cookbook – will include the following choices –

Starters: Crown of asparagus with crab and mango or Eggs Drumkilbo or Langoustines Lossiemouth.

Mains: Partridge hotpot or paupiette of sole with watercress mousse or Arbroath smokie, leek and courgette tart or roasted loin of Balmoral venison or cutlets of Windsor lamb & sauce paloise

Sweets: Apricot crepes soufflé or rhubarb and white chocolate parfait or sable Breton with English strawberries and lemon cream or blackcurrant sorbet or chocolate biscuit cake.

"And with coffee they serve Buckingham Palace dessert chocolates which they have flown over from the shop at The Royal Collection Trust," said the observer.

"They're only £8.95 a box, much cheaper than any of London's other luxury chocolates. But they have the Buckingham Palace crest on the lid and it's the crest that counts."

We like the Royal Family more than we do our own politicians



PRINCE Charles and Camilla Duchess of Cornwall at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC during their visit to America last week. Prince Charles was told that Americans like the Royal Family more than their own politicians.

Photo by Tim Rooke/REX



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ROYAL LONDON*Kate visits one of her favourite charities ...*

Eight months pregnant but the Duchess continues her support for children's centres

ROYAL favourite Catherine, the Duchess of Cambridge, was handed books and toys for Prince George when she visited Brookhill Children's Centre in Greenwich.

The duchess, who is eight months pregnant, delighted children and parents at the volunteer-led charity Home-Start, which supports families.

The charity says that many families face pressures caused by isolation, mental ill health, multiple births, bereavement, disability, poor housing or financial stress. At the coffee morning the duchess chatted with parents about stresses on them and their children and then watched a volunteer training session.

Rob Parkinson, the chief executive of Home-

Start UK, who showed the duchess around the centre, said: "It was a great honour to be able to show the duchess our work. The duchess really wanted to hear about the challenges that parents of young children can face and she was very engaged with all of the families."

"The work that the duchess saw in Greenwich represents the incredible work that is done by 288 local Home-Starts up and down the country."

"The duchess has heard first-hand from families whose lives have been turned around with the support of Home-Start, and that shows just how important our work is."

As the duchess left the centre she was presented with a bouquet and gifts for Prince George.



■ **COFFEE MORNING KATE:** The Duchess of Cambridge is applauded by parents as she visits the Brookhill Children's Centre in Greenwich

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WHERE TO SEE YOUR FAVOURITE ROYAL

FULL details of future and recent events in the ever-busy diaries of the many members of The Royal Family are available from the official website www.royal.gov.uk but here's the London schedule for the week ahead for Where To See A Royal.

● **Wednesday March 31st**

The Princess Royal, as chair of the International Olympic Committee Nomination Commission, will hold a dinner at Buckingham Palace.

The Duke of Kent, as Patron of The Hanover Band, will attend the Royal Marsden Benefit Concert at St Andrew's Church EC4.

● **Thursday April 1st**

The Princess Royal, as chair of the International Olympic Committee Nomination Commission, will hold a dinner at Buckingham Palace.

The Princess Royal, as Patron of The Butler Trust, will hold the Annual Awards Ceremony at St. James's Palace.

The Princess Royal, as President of the Edith Cavell Centenary Appeal, will attend a Scholarship Awards Ceremony at the Fishmongers' Hall, London Bridge.

LONDON WEEKLY NEWS GROUP

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SHOWBIZ SPECIAL

Griff Rhys Jones on an African adventure

Slow train through Africa



TV's favourite travel guide Griff Rhys Jones is returning to the screen with another incredible journey, this time through the dark continent

There's nowhere else quite like Africa," says Griff, whose new series starts soon on ITV. "It's a billion people speaking thousands of languages and a paradise of wild animals and natural wonders. I'm going to take it on in an unhurried manner aboard Africa's railways. It's the ideal way to meet its people and to experience its beauty."

Griff explores Africa the unhurried way, as he takes to the continent's railways to immerse himself in the joy and sometimes the frustration of travelling through a beautiful and beguiling continent, using the most romantic method of transportation. Travelling a total of 7,000 miles over five journeys, he explores fascinating landscapes, encounters unforgettable wildlife and meets extraordinary people.

Griff travels through Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, Kenya and Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. He experiences the extraordinary diversity of Africa, on and off the railways, drawing together a rich and entertaining story.

TV reporter Sally Symes caught up with Griff when he stepped down from the train.

● **What can viewers expect from the series? How would you summarise it?**

"It's going through Africa by the back trail. The rail service across Africa is good in places, hugely efficient in others, dangerous in no-go areas and almost non-existent in others.

"We took this route, the slow train - and it was slow in places - but the series is about the way many African nations were forged. So apart from the journey I make, the underlying story is about colonials who brought the railway to many parts of Africa. It is how the modern world arrived in Africa, and usually to exploit bits of it."

"The whole overview is a look at ordinary people living and working in Africa. Most of the stories that come out of Africa are about disease, poverty and war but the majority of the population of Africa gets on with their lives and don't encounter the brutal end of this."

"People were genuinely pleased to hear I wasn't there making a film about poverty. There's a won-

derful bit in Zambia where I went to the railway training school. They just wanted to know what I thought of their country. To me, it was a very important part of what we were doing. It's a huge place. And there are very different countries there. That was the great excitement for me."

● **During the series you cover an astonishing 7000 miles, is travelling a passion? How long did filming process take?**

"It was in chunks of three or four weeks and 15-hour journeys were quite common. We had to leapfrog a bit but yes, we did a lot of travelling on trains!

"It was a glorious opportunity. You're very privileged when you go with television. You get access to areas that you wouldn't and couldn't if you were just a traveller. It is an eye opener and it makes you realise what an extraordinary, beautiful and various world we live in. We went out into the hills in the back of Zambia to watch the sun come up, it was just beautiful. We looked at a lot of National Parks maintained by African countries. We saw wildlife, yes, but we also visited towns. The railway largely exists as a link down the east coast, on the west coast it generally drives inland, and was built to pick-up what they were looking for; ivory, gold or metal."

● **Of all the countries you visited for the series, did you have a personal favourite?**

"They all stood out. It's not easy to choose one. I love Morocco and have been there many times. Fez is one of the greatest medieval cities in the world. You walk through the streets and you could be in ancient Rome. You come outside of the city into the hills. The countryside is maintained by religious charity groups. It is one of the most exotic, detailed, concentrated ancient cultures with the most beautiful things available. They make all the leather work for the Italian fashion manufacturers.

"Then you go to Kenya and suddenly you're travelling through Tsavo. This is Africa too! Wild and open and limitless.

"You're in Constantine in Algeria, a city built on rock linked by suspension bridges with wonderful views across a deep gorge. You think, 'Am I in

Africa, or am I in Switzerland?' The diversity is incredible.

"South Africa is a shock because you have got used to laid-back, dusty roads and run down villages, then you encounter freeways and huge towns which feel like Manhattan.

"Namibia is different again, it is an almost empty country. There are so few people there and it has vast ancient deserts and huge landscapes. It's just staggering."

● **Any other highlights that stood out?**

"Victoria Falls is actually more like a municipal park than I expected - with an enormous water attraction. The surrounding area retains a strong Victorian feel. Sometimes we did find ourselves in places that are famous because they are tourist destinations. We would travel in on a train which was entirely a black African experience and then arrive somewhere completely international, because of all the backpackers. We were in changing environments all the time. Everything about Victoria Falls is exciting. People throw themselves off on bungee cords at one end but down below is a river full of crocodiles."

● **How did the overall journey impact on your view of Britain's colonial and industrial influence over Africa?**

"It does change your ideas. In Zimbabwe and Kimberley in South Africa, you come face-to-face with the story of human greed and power which built these railways. Much exploration into Africa in those days was fuelled by the notion that Africa could become a prosperous adjunct of Europe.

"It's difficult to transport ourselves back to the Victorian frame of mind. The mining industry helped to put segregation into place. The lust for gold and diamonds was what pushed the railway forward and the system transported the workforce but the industries exercised a fierce control over the labour market. Dutch sellers and business orientated white British sellers fought for power. There's a history overlying the railway, which is the history of the struggle for Africa. You can't avoid that."

● **You seemed to experience every extremity of train travel, from travelling as freight and a 33-hour delay, to having a bath on the luxurious train to Cape Town?**

"In North Africa, the trains were on time and beautifully air conditioned, great trains. The Moroccan trains were part of the French railway sys-

tem and have been well maintained since.

"One of the most interesting trips was the rural train into Bulawayo. This was a bit of a contrast. Run down and rickety. But I loved the people. They thought we were very strange. And, in South Africa, the different forms of railway under one system were extraordinary. We travelled for a bit on the luxury train and the carriage had a bath but also by suburban township train, used by the black populace and rough as old boots.

"The Tazara train in Zambia was quite funny. The first class carriage had sofas with leopard print skin on them and holes in their covers and a ragged bar on one end.

"Generally, they don't seem to have safety regulations to compare with our trains. In Kariba outside Nairobi the railway track is the main street of the town and the shops come right up to the edge of the track so they have to get people out the way. The hooter is an important tool for train drivers."

● **You met some great characters during your travels and made a lot of effort to befriend them. Was anyone particularly memorable?**

"We didn't have an interpreter with us and we used to roam up and down the trains to meet people and in the end we found the best way was to sit down and I'd talk to the camera about where I was and what I was doing and the other people in the carriage would listen and start talking naturally with me.

In North Africa I was told people won't talk to you if you don't have anything to offer, which is why we took pastries. We met two interesting guys who worked in the mines and had been to Tunis to buy clothes. They were getting the train back but my French is terrible so I struggled to understand a lot of what they were saying!"

● **Has the series put you off train travel for life or given you an appetite for more?**

"No, not at all. I love trains. I am a person who would much rather get a train. On the train, you can read a book, walk up and down and eat a meal. You can look out over at the landscape, it's something to do with the height, compared to being stuck in a car. I have to say, I never think ever of writing poetry until I'm sitting on a train. If I had any talent, I would sit there and write a poem! Instead I make TV."

Slow Train Through Africa. ITV coming soon.

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Let them eat cake!

LISA Faulkner has a lot to thank Celebrity MasterChef for. Since winning the show in 2010, the former *Holby City* actress has carved out a successful second career as a TV cook, and released three recipe books.

The BBC One show was also where she met Australian chef John Torode, the firm-but-fair judge who eventually became her partner.

"I took on three jobs at the same time as MasterChef, thinking I would only be in it for a day, and I ended up in it until the end. That was amazing in itself," the 43-year-old says.

"It completely changed my life and I haven't stopped cooking since. It's been amazing, really."

Torode - who she began dating in 2012 - is "lovely, very lovely", according to Faulkner, who has an eight-year-old

daughter, Billie, from her marriage to actor Chris Coghill.

"Somebody said, 'So what's it like at home when you're both cooking?' It's just like we're both cooking. It's not like he's going, 'Oh, you need to do that', or, 'Hurry Lisa, you've got five minutes!'," she adds with a laugh.

Her life has been busy recently, with the release of her third cookbook, *Tea & Cake*.

"I wanted to do a book that was just about things that I liked, and memories of tea in days gone by when I was little - things like sandwiches and cake and tins of biscuits," Faulkner explains.

"We run around so much and we are all crazy busy," she adds. "We can get so caught up in everything that's going on, and sometimes just to stop for five minutes with a cup of tea in a pot and a piece

of cake makes the world seem right."

Faulkner has also been collaborating with kitchen appliance makers Hotpoint, on a campaign encouraging the nation to love their kitchens and explore their cooking potential (learn more at www.hotpoint.co.uk).

She is keen to stress that image isn't everything when it comes to baking.

"If you've made a cake for somebody you love and there are little dents in it, or the icing slides off, it's how it tastes, who you've made it for and why you've made it that counts," she says.

"My grandma was properly slapdash, but she was an amazing cook."

Billie, who Faulkner adopted in 2006 when she was 15 months old, is also a keen chef.

"She loves to cook and bake, and set the table, anything to do with food, she's well into. She likes making pastry and bread, and she loves making chicken noodle soup.

"I feel so very grateful to have her that I spend as much time as possible with her," adds Faulkner, who was 16 when her mother Julie died of cancer. "She and I are a proper little team."

While best known for her culinary prowess these days, Lisa hasn't bid farewell to her acting career.

"I went for something the other day - that I didn't get, sadly - but it was nice to go in again," she says.

"What's exciting for me is that I'll only go for characters that I really want, because I have another job that I absolutely love."

As for turning 43 earlier this year, she confesses: "I don't feel like I'm grown up enough to be 43, I feel like a child!"

"It's weird to think that great big number is me," the actress-turned-cook adds.

"But when I look back on what I've done, I think, I've fitted quite a lot in."



MARK HIX'S RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Sary Dom steak tartare

Serves 4

STARY Dom is a large traditional Warsaw brasserie with lots of theatre going on at the tables in an old-fashioned way you rarely see any more. Their preparation of steak tartare at the table is like seeing a skilled Japanese chef at work, slicing and chopping the fillet with razor-sharp accuracy.

500g very fresh lean fillet, sirloin or topside steak, finely chopped
2-3 medium-sized shallots, peeled, halved and very finely chopped
50g capers, drained, rinsed and chopped
50g gherkins, finely chopped
100g white button mushrooms, finely chopped and marinated in 2tbsp cider vinegar for 2-3 hours
2tsp Worcestershire sauce
1tbsp olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

With a very sharp chopping knife, slice your beef as finely as possible. Mix all of the ingredients together and season to taste. You may wish to add a little more Worcestershire sauce, or the other ingredients - up to you. Spoon the steak tartare on to a plate or, if you prefer, push it into a ring mould. Serve with a leaf salad and chips, or toast.



CLAFOUTIS LIMOUSIN

From Lisa Faulkner's book
Let Them Eat Cake

400ml milk
150g flour
70g caster sugar
Pinch of salt
3 eggs
2tbsp rum (optional)
About 80g butter, for greasing
200g fresh cherries
Icing sugar, for dusting
Preheat the oven to 180C (350F)/gas mark 4.
Put the milk in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Take off the heat and leave to cool.

To make the batter, mix the flour, sugar and salt together well, then beat in the eggs, one by one. With a spatula, incorporate the boiled milk very slowly and gently, turning the

mixture rather than beating. Add the rum, if using.
Generously grease a 2cm deep, 25cm diameter baking tin with butter and add the cherries, spreading them evenly. Pour the batter over the top and cook in the preheated oven for 30 minutes. Sprinkle with a little icing sugar before serving hot or cold



LIQUID NEWS



● **MATCH made in heaven...** If you're wondering what to drink with your favourite Green & Black's dark chocolate this Easter, Taylor's Late Bottled Vintage 2009, Portugal (£14.99, Majestic) will make a dreamy combination. The concentrated dark fruits in this finely structured vintage, from the famous family of port producers, with its fragrant aromas and spicy notes are the best bar none with anything dark and decadent.

● **The Morella the merrier...** A brandy once favoured by Queen Victoria (her portrait appears on the label), Grants Morella Cherry Brandy (£17.50, 50cl, www.shepherdneame.co.uk) has been given a makeover and the new label design is embossed with traditional gold lettering, scrolls, cherries and HRH The Prince of Wales's Feathers to reflect its long heritage. This rich, cherry liqueur even pops up in Charles Dickens' novel *The Pickwick Papers* and its history dates back to 1774. An English tipple made in Maidstone, it can be enjoyed straight or in cocktails.

"Grant's Morella Cherry Brandy is a prestigious, high quality liqueur with an enviable reputation and heritage," says Michael Prior, manager of Todd's The Wine Company, the wine and spirits division of Shepherd Neame. "We are pleased with its new packaging, which we feel conveys the unique quality and long history of the product."





TALK OF THE TOWN

MUSIC ★ THEATRE ★ REVIEWS

*The entertainment scene
across London*



■ JOE Coen (Jonah) and Ilan Goodman (Liam) Joe Coen (Jonah) and Ilan Goodman (Liam)



■ Ilan Goodman (Liam) and Gina Bramhill (Melody)

A funny and thought-provoking play



■ JENNA Augen (Daphna)

THE buzz surrounding the production of *Bad Jews* at the West End Arts Theatre has been huge, particularly following the Transport for London's decision to ban the publicity posters from the Underground, concerned that they may cause offence.

Written by Joshua Harmon, Michael Longhurst's production was first seen in Bath's Ustinov Studio last summer, and then enjoyed a very successful run at the St James Theatre earlier this year, receiving rave reviews at both venues.

The story revolves around three cousins and a sparkly new girlfriend, who gather in a New York apartment following the funeral of the family's beloved grandfather - a Holocaust survivor.

The grandfather has left behind a treasured family heirloom with religious significance, and a battle ensues for who is most deserving of Pappy's bequest.

Leading the charge are Daphna - Jenna Augen, a neurotic smart-mouthed college student and her cousin, the suave and wealthy Liam played by Ilan Goodman.



By **NICKY SWEETLAND**
LWN Theatre Critic

Augen won a UK theatre award for her portrayal in the Bath production and although a little more mature than the character really requires, she delivers a very energetic and realistic performance. The pace of the monologues is good although in places I found them a little too long, particularly during the angrier moments.

This was also the case for some of Goodman's rants, which felt too drawn out at times. Having said that, Goodman played Liam with a wonderfully condescending air, and showed great depth during his pontifications about his 'Super Jew' cousin.

My stand out performance of the piece however was Gina Bramhill as Melody, the pure hearted simple American girl who looks for the good in every situation and whose rendition of 'Summer Time' was hilariously painful.

Able supported by the brooding Joe Coen as Jonah, the cast was excellent and kept a very wordy and difficult script moving through a truthful representation of the awkwardness of family occasions.

A clever and witty insight into Jewish family traditions, I would recommend this funny and thoughtful play and wish the company every success in their West End run.

Bad Jews will play at the Arts Theatre until May 30th.

Trainspotting - not an easy ride

IT was enjoyable to be back at The King's Head Theatre in Islington after a few years away. This venue is fabulously vibrant and is one of London's best kept theatre secrets. Set back behind a very busy pub, the theatre is intimate but has a reputation for staging low-budget yet high quality productions.

The presentation of the Irvin Welch cult classic *Trainspotting* fitted both of these criteria and marks the 21st anniversary of this cautionary tale.

Fresh from winning the Sunday Times award for best new play at the Edinburgh Festival in August, *In Your Face* theatre presents this narrative of 90s drug culture, in a powerfully dark yet charming way. In a series of stories told by Renton (Gavin Ross) the audience is given an insight into the struggle to maintain a heroin habit and the inevitable difficult interactions this provokes with peers, family, and society.

Immersing the audience in the action from the

start, this very cleverly staged and directed play made me feel as if I was back in the 90s, with period music and lighting helping to create an authentic atmosphere.

The acting of this fresh-faced, youthful company is absolutely excellent, and I couldn't help but love the ever so slightly unsavoury characters they portray. None more so than Begbie played by Chris Dennis, who's slightly psycho rants at unsuspecting audience members were a bit frightening but also highly comedic.

The issues in this play are not made light of, but told as a gritty and honest portrayal of life as a drug addict.

It's not for the faint-hearted, with strong language, nudity and some quite revolting stage effects, but I would happily watch this play again and would recommend it - although perhaps not to my granny.



■ HEROIN ADDICT: Mark Renton played by Gavin Ross

TALK OF THE TOWN ★ *The entertainment scene across London*

Dr Pozzi - at home at the National Portrait Gallery



CENTRE stage at the National Portrait Gallery's current exhibition of 'Artists and Friends' of John Singer Sargent is the portrait of a strikingly handsome man in his mid-thirties, clad in a scarlet dressing gown against a background of rich crimson.

The expatriate American's 1881 portrait of Dr Samuel-Jean Pozzi, on loan from the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, is drawing large and admiring crowds. But who exactly was this exuberant doctor?

Born in 1846 to a Protestant family in Southwest France, Pozzi studied medicine in Paris and rapidly began a distinguished career as a surgeon.

Appalled by the suffering of women he saw as a student, the result of frequent pregnancies, untreated sexually-transmitted infections, and cancers with no known cure, he branched out into the emerging discipline of gynaecology and devoted 40 years to transforming it into a scientifically-based specialty.

A French pioneer of antiseptics in surgery, Pozzi translated Lister's work into French, saving countless lives. He authored a remarkable treatise on the diseases

by Caroline de Costa and Francesca Miller

of women and many original papers, becoming known as 'the father of French gynaecology'.

He did not confine himself to technical knowledge however, also championing the rights of women to be well-informed about their bodies long before the advent of the feminist movement.

While maintaining a successful private practice, in which he treated many eminent members of le tout Paris, Pozzi also ran the public gynaecology service in the Broca Hospital, where, declaiming "I treat my patients with beauty" he had the walls decorated with frescoes by such distinguished painters as Georges Clairin.

Doctor God

Among his many friends were numerous artists, writers, musicians and actors, the most notable of the latter being the

actress Sarah Bernhardt, who called him 'Doctor God'. The two met in the Latin Quarter when he was a student and she just beginning her stellar career; they were lovers intermittently for ten years and friends for nearly 50. When Pozzi, who spoke excellent English, translated the work of Darwin into French, Bernhardt named her pet chimpanzee Darwin.

Kindness and intelligence

Another friend and admirer was Marcel Proust, whose father and brother were medical colleagues of Pozzi. The 15-year-old Proust was treated to his first dinner "in town" by Pozzi, and following his death wrote of Pozzi's "kindness, his intelligence, his talent and his beauty."

Pozzi was also an enthusiastic patron of the theatre and the arts, amassing a highly-regarded collection. He met Sargent at the start of the young artist's career and the two became lifelong friends. Pozzi

valued his portrait and kept it in his private collection.

Abandoning his faith after his experiences as a military doctor in the war of 1870, Pozzi, always a Republican, became an atheist, a humanist and a political activist. Senator for the Dordogne for several years at the time of the Dreyfus case, he was an ardent opponent of anti-Semitism, a strong supporter of the Captain, and later his personal doctor.

He volunteered again at the outbreak of the First World War and served as a surgeon until the day of his death in 1918.

Shot in his consulting rooms by a deranged (male) patient, he died, perhaps fittingly, on the operating table, his friend Georges Clemenceau, doctor and Prime Minister of France, at his side.

Caroline de Costa and Francesca Miller are the authors of The Diva and Doctor God - letters from Sarah Bernhardt to Dr Samuel Pozzi.



Shaun helps to celebrate Easter at Kew

LOOKING for an Easter egg hunt? Kew Gardens has brought in a kids' favourite to help the children find the Easter Bunny – an Easter Sheep.

Shaun the Sheep, Aardman's much-loved movie star, is bouncing into Kew with "a flock-full of family fun for all ages".

Shaun, who jumped into his first cinematic lead role last month, will be bringing a host of friends to revel in the gardens this growing season.

"This Shaun-the-Sheep-themed spring salute will celebrate the beauty of nature, encouraging everyone to value and celebrate the British countryside and its wonderful array of wildflowers," says Kew.

Big crowds are expected, especially because of the Garden's starring role in the current Raymond Blanc series Kew On A Plate on BBC2.

The annual Easter egg hunt will take place at Madcap Meadow, White Peaks and the Nash Conservatory on Easter Sunday from 9.30am to mid-day.

"Easter egg hunters will need to find three of our Kew flock and collect a token chocolate dropping from each one. Once they have all three, they will find the Easter bunny, and can claim their chocolate eggs supplied by Divine chocolate".

Besides Shaun, Kew's own special flock of South Downs sheep from their Wakehurst gardens will be taking up residence at Kew for the Easter festival, complete with a shepherdess rounding up the flock on a bicycle.

At Madcap Meadow, near Brentford Gate, where a blanket of British wildflowers, seasonal bulbs

and grasses have come into bloom, other Easter activities await the families; including:

Wellie Wanging: Where you throw baby wellies at the scarecrow farmers to knock their melon heads off.

Sheep Hopper Maze: Bounce around a simple course made of hay bales.

Vegetable Orchestra: Here, musicians play their own comic, veggie-made instruments, and bring vegetable-themed equipment for guests to use, such as shakers, gourds, seed shakers, and maracas. Visitors will also have the opportunity to learn how some of the sound effects from the Shaun the Sheep Movie were created.

Other outdoor activities at Kew include the Bitzer's Sheepdog Trials: The meadow arena is transformed into a field of games and activities, with visitors trying to herd, bounce and roll Shirley the Sheep back into her pen.

There are also the Bean to Baaa chocolate workshops at the Sir Joseph Banks Building, where visitors can discover how to grind beans grown at Kew into chocolate, as demonstrated in the TV series last week by presenter Kate Humble.

Easter will also see Kew Gardens in full spring bloom, with the arresting beauty of over five million bulbs as swathes of snowdrops, crocuses, and daffodils make a riot of colour. For more unusual, exotic bulbs, visit Davies Alpine House, Cherry Tree Walk and the 250 magnolias grouped together at Elizabeth Gate

Keep up to date with Kew's spring flowering and plan your visit on www.kew.org.

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TALK OF THE TOWN ★ The entertainment scene across London

Suchet's walk on the saintly side

SPARE a thought for David Suchet this Easter. While you're feasting on chocolate, he'll be watching his waistline for his next role - so he can squeeze into a corset.

The actor best known as Poirot is due to start rehearsals for Oscar Wilde's *The Importance Of Being Earnest* immediately after the long Bank Holiday weekend, and he's decided cinching himself in is the only way to carry himself like Lady Bracknell.

"I will have to wear a corset, otherwise I may find myself doing this," he says, slumping back in his chair with legs akimbo, a deep belly laugh bubbling up. "And that would be unacceptable on every level, especially for the stalls!"

More of Lady Bracknell and that iconic line of hers later, but first to the more serious matter of Suchet's latest documentary series, which will see him back on screen as a presenter on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

David Suchet: In *The Footsteps Of St Peter* takes the actor to Israel and Italy, following the disciple closest to Jesus, who went on to become Bishop of Rome and the first Pope.

The actor, now 68, took a deeply personal journey around the Mediterranean back in 2012, in the footsteps of Paul the Apostle for a previous documentary. Suchet converted to the religion when he was 40 and while he says good-naturedly: "I won't go into that old story, because we'll be here until tomorrow", it's clear how passionate he is about his faith and what he learned about St Peter from making the new show.

"I discovered this wonderfully flawed human being," says Suchet. "A lot of Christians now look to Peter as being so human and fallible and adorable. He's a loveable rogue, isn't he? He allows us all to fail and still be acceptable."

Suchet was born in London to a South African gynaecologist father and an English mother, but was raised without religion. He went to boarding school with his brothers Peter and John, who's a well-known presenter, before studying at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

His career began on the stage as a member of the Royal Shakespeare Company in the 1970s and television roles followed, including in 1985 playing Inspector Japp, opposite Peter Ustinov as Poirot in

Thirteen At Dinner. Four years later, he would take on Agatha Christie's meticulous Belgian detective himself - a role he played until *Curtain: Poirot's Last Case*, in 2013.

He admits he's still slightly in mourning for Poirot.

"I'll never let him go. I'll never be able to because he's on our screens all the time somewhere in the world," he says.

Poirot's reach

"I was in Rome last week and he was on - speaking Italian! I'm told by ITV there could be 760 million viewers worldwide, that's quite a lot."

A few weeks ago, Suchet and his wife Sheila, who he married in 1976 and with whom he has a daughter Katherine and son Robert, went to Prague for a weekend they'd bid for in a silent charity auction - and he saw the extent of Poirot's reach.

"We walked into the hotel and there were these young people behind reception who saw me and went crazy because they grew up in the Nineties, and with all the problems in Prague, watching Poirot gave them comfort."

"One person had tears in her eyes saying that her mother and father were kept going by the series. You just do the job and go home - but it's had such a wonderful, far-reaching effect beyond just being entertainment, and that's very humbling."

But back to Lady Bracknell, who Suchet will be

playing on stage at London's Vaudeville Theatre from June to November.

"I'll be a woman for six months," he declares, then stops...

"Did I say that? Did I say I'd be a woman for six months? I think I did," he adds, before collapsing in giggles.

He's only once before donned a dress to play Napoleon escaping in disguise, but he makes a very attractive woman, from promotional pictures of the new play.

"I never thought I'd be thanking someone for giving me that compliment," he says, eyes twinkling.

Suchet concedes that he's excited but also "nervous" about taking on such a formidable character.

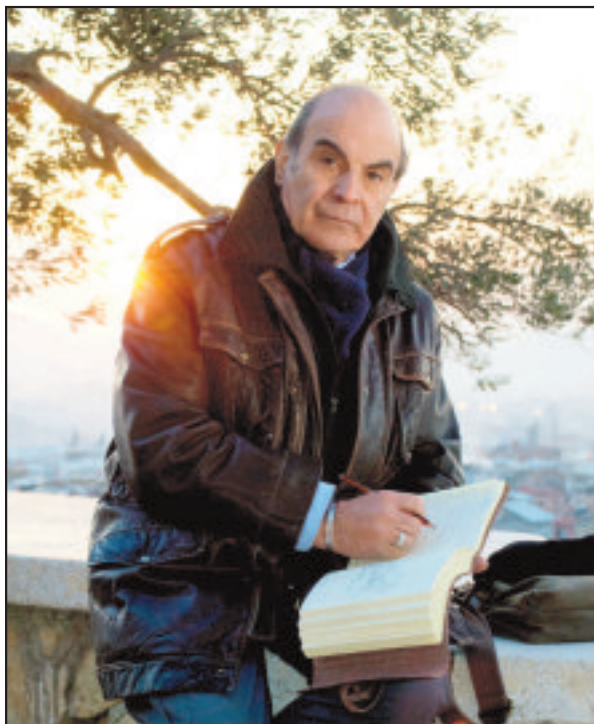
"She's nouveau riche - she's not naturally born to high society, so it's putting on airs and graces, which is why she's such a great comic character."

And then, of course, there's the "a handbag?!" line - Lady Bracknell's reaction to discovering her prospective son-in-law was adopted after being found in a handbag in Victoria Station.

"I have no idea how I'm going to approach it. In rehearsal, I expect we'll try a hundred different ways. You've just got to take a deep breath and get through it as best as you can."

● *David Suchet: In The Footsteps Of St Peter* is on BBC One on Good Friday (April 3) and Easter Sunday (April 5)

● *The Importance Of Being Earnest* is at The Vaudeville Theatre from June 24 to November 7. For tickets, visit www.vaudevilletheatre.org.uk



■ IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST PETER: David Suchet, above, and right, as Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest*

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A rare evening with Al Pacino

ACCLAIMED actor and director Al Pacino will return to London for a one-off show in May. Following a sold out night at the Palladium in 2013, the show will celebrate Pacino's career as he shares his passion for acting and directing.

The evening will explore his time off-Broadway in the '60s right up to the present day, and will include some never heard before stories and some never before seen clips, as well as the rare chance to speak directly with Pacino.

Eight times academy award nominated, Pacino won an Oscar for his performance in

Scent of a Woman, and has appeared in some of the most famous films of all time including, *The Godfather Trilogy*, *Dog Day*, *Serpico*, *Dick Tracy*, and *Scarface*.

Tickets range from £40 to £200 and a limited number of Meet and Greet Experience packages are available. There are also a small number of limited VIP packages that will allow a ticket buyer an intimate experience to travel alongside Al Pacino as he tours from one European destination to another.

An evening with Al Pacino Eventim Apollo on Friday May, 22nd. Tickets are on sale now through www.eveningwithpacino.com



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Any person who wishes to make a representation in relation to this application must give notice in writing of his/her representation by 21st April 2015 stating the grounds for making said representation to: Licensing Service, 14th Floor, City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1.
The public register where applications are available to be viewed by members of the public can be accessed online by visiting at www.westminster.gov.uk/Licensing and following the link to the public register.

The Licensing Authority must receive representations by the date given above. The Licensing Authority will have regard to any such representation in considering the application. It is an offence, under section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003, to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in or in connection with an application for premises licence and the maximum fine on being convicted of such an offence is £5000.

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13. All accounts must be settled within the terms agreed by the Company and the Customer.

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Interview date: 30th April 2015

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NJC scale point 34 - £32,890, Full Time (36 hours per week)

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Interview date: 29th April 2015

Potential start date: w/c Monday 18th May

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Green answers England call

KEEPER Robert Green was given temporary respite from QPR's battle against relegation when he earned a recall to the England squad.

Called up to replace injured Southampton keeper Fraser Forster, Green was an unused substitute for Roy Hodgson's side for much of the 4-0 victory against Lithuania at Wembley last Friday, when No.1 choice Joe

Interview by **PAUL LAGAN**

Hart was a virtual spectator.

Now 35, Green has played more than 500 first team matches, firstly for Norwich City and then West Ham United before notching up 80 appearances for The Hoops.

"It's been great to be back with England," said Green, who has been capped 12 times by his country but has only appeared once at international level since the ill-fated 2010 World Cup tournament in South Africa.

In the limelight

Playing consistently well for QPR has kept him in the limelight.

"That, and other people getting year-long injuries," he said of Forster's withdrawal. "It's something that's out of my control. What I focus on is playing for my club."

"I just want to stop the ball going in the goal. If things happen because of that, then so be it."

Of being part of the successful new-look squad, he said: "I thoroughly enjoyed it. It's always pleasing to be involved."

"To come to Wembley and see it full is something special. You never hope it will be your last appearance there but I know it could be. That's the nature of the way football is and how quickly it changes. It's difficult to get here in a club situation and to come here with your country is just as tricky, because competition for places is fierce."

Green is nobody's fool and understands that while he is lucky to get the nod, he could also be heading to France

with England next summer for the finals of Euro 2016.

"I'm not being foolish to the situation," he said. "I'm being fairly pragmatic. It wouldn't have happened if we didn't have so many injuries but these things happen in football. I'd like to think it's a good opportunity for me."

Is going to the Euro finals in France a realistic goal for you?

"Yeah, hopefully. First and foremost, staying in the Premier League is the goal and then things come off the back of that. I don't want to get ahead of myself. That's one of the key things in football I've learnt."

While acknowledging his England career contained an infamous howler during that World Cup in Rustenburg, South Africa, when he let slip through his body a Clint Dempsey shot that gifted the USA the equaliser in a 1-1 draw, Green is not dwelling on it. Instead, he remains as positive as possible.

"I couldn't give a monkeys when I'm reminded about it. I don't give it much thought. The only people who mention it are away fans and journalists."

"That was a game that happened five years ago. The unfortunate thing about it is that – well, we didn't lose the game – we are still talking about it now."

He understandably bridled at a suggestion from another journalist that the error would be the legacy of his international career.

"Is it? That's nice of you to decide my legacy," he said.

"I have been involved in something like 90 games with the England squad. I've not played in every one but I think I've only lost one game – and that was against the World and European champions Spain, so it's not too bad a record to have."

Green explained how his recall came about and stressed that he would never turn down a chance to play for England.

"People do refuse to play for their country but I got asked: 'How do you feel about coming in this week?'"

Want to play

"I want to play for my country, so if I don't come, then I won't play," he said.

Earlier in the week there were reports linking Green – who has another year left on his QPR contract – with a summer move to Chelsea as experienced cover for Thibaut Courtois, if current No.2 Peter Cech decides he wants regular first team football elsewhere. Does that appeal?

"It's not something I've ever considered, so I don't really know. I've not seen the articles."

"It's not really something I'd consider until I turn up to training and get told I'm no longer required, so there you go," Green added.

WITH no official first team action last weekend, QPR coasted to a 6-1 behind-closed-doors win against Swindon Town at Harlington thanks to goals by Bobby Zamora (2), Armand Traore, Tyler Blackwood, Niko Kranjcar and Adel Taarabt.

Hoops renew their desperate quest for vital Premier League with away games at West Bromwich Albion (Saturday) and fellow strugglers Aston Villa (next Tuesday).

Victory at Villa Park would appear essential if QPR are to achieve manager Chris Ramsey's target of four wins to secure safety.



QPR's Richard Green Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

RUGBY UNION

Hammersmith & Fulham ... 8 Old Haberdashers ... 15

HAMMERSMITH & Fulham went into this game knowing that a win would keep their play-off ambitions firmly in their hands – but now they must rely on other results going their way.

Starting strongly, the home side went ahead through a penalty, quickly followed by a try from Joel Rabbidge.

However, a combination of unforced errors and penalties gave Old Habs the opportunity to respond with two penalties and a try of their own. With the game delicately balanced, Hammers were constantly testing the Old Habs' defence but couldn't find a way through.

The second-half was much the same, with Hammers pushing towards Old Habs' line but failing to turn opportunities into points.

A week earlier, Hammers had travelled to north-west London for a crucial clash with league winners Harrow, which ended in a 30-13 victory for the visitors.

H&F started well, keeping possession and working their way into the Harrow 22, although a couple of handling errors and soft penalties allowed Harrow the opportunity to clear the ball. It was another advantage that led Harrow to try a drop goal which sneaked over, having hit a Hammer hand on the way.

The visitors then began to apply pressure to the Harrow scrum which collapsed and resulted in a penalty that James Gallo converted.

Moment of magic

James Lo then provided a moment of magic. Flying up the left wing, he chipped over the top and turned the ball back over. Hammers moved the ball wide, where Tony Bryant cut through and provided the final pass for Henry Tanner to finish. The teams were tied 13-all at the break.

The second-half was more of the same from Hammers – good attacking rugby and solid defence. However, some soft penalties for infringements at the break down and offsidess were costing them territory and

Blue & White In Brief

■ **FULHAM** have been fined £20,000 after the club admitted an FA charge of failing to ensure its players conducted themselves in an orderly fashion.

The charge related to an incident in or around the 51st minute of the game against Leeds United on March 18.

■ **A GOAL** in each half by Luca De La Torre twice put Fulham U18s ahead at Stoke on Saturday – but Whites had to settle for a 2-2 draw.

Fulham: Soutter, Sheekleford, Davies, Elworthy, Edun (Adebayor 59), Walker, Nabay, Smile, Shamsi (Dolan 61), De La Torre, Redford (Sessegnon 59).

■ **CHELSEA** Ladies got their new season off to a flying start with a 6-0 thrashing of Watford in the FA Women's Cup fifth round, followed by a 2-1 win in their opening Super League match at Notts County last Sunday.

■ **QPR Ladies** saw their run of four wins in five games halted by league leaders Cardiff City, where they suffered a 2-0 defeat in the FA Women's Premier League on Sunday.

resulted in a yellow card. But even during the 10 minutes in which they were reduced to 14 men, Hammers' defence stood strong.

There was a brilliant counter by Bryant, who was caught short of the line before a quick ruck allowed James Boysons to bulldoze his way over.

Another try came through a turnover just inside the Harrow half. Si Doherty chipping cross field to Henry Tanner, who then kicked through for Joel Rabbidge to chase. As the ball bobbed over the line, Hammers had secured a priceless 30-13 victory plus the bonus point.

Despite last Sunday's loss, Hammers occupy fourth place in the table and still have a chance of making the play-offs. Their final scheduled game is at Hemel Hempstead on April 11.

JUNIOR FOOTBALL

KENSINGTON Dragons under-13s beat St Josephs 4-0 at Linford Christie Stadium to secure promotion. Here's a round-up of the other KD teams' latest results:

* **16As** beat Beatrislip Rangers 7-2 away to secure another three vital points, despite having a stand-in goalkeeper. This was a great Dragons performance in which they dominated throughout.

* **U15As** beat Harrow St Marys 5-2 away despite missing several players, including both goalies. Dragons put in another solid performance and had the game wrapped up 4-1 at half-time. The second-half was a bit flat but KD saw out the game to remain unbeaten in the league with one game remaining.

* **U15Bs** drew 2-2 with division leaders Willesden Constantine at Linford Christie Stadium in what was probably their roughest game of the season. Knowing that one point would secure them top slot, Willesden were more prepared to play the man than the ball.

* **U12s** beat Parkfield Youth 3-0 away to continue their winning run.

* **U11s** lost 5-2 at Pitshanger in the League Trophy Cup despite being gifted the first goal. Pitshanger's lowly league position is misleading, for they have one of the highest positive goal differences in the league, so they were a tougher opponent than they looked on paper.

CRICKET



Kensington & Chelsea Cricket Club's first XI

THERE is a free net session for new players wishing to join Kensington & Chelsea Cricket Club ahead of the new season.

Practice sessions are held at Paddington Recreational Ground on Wednesday evenings from 7.00pm to 9.00pm.

KCCC is looking for new players to fill its four teams, which play on Saturdays and Sundays, so why not get along to the nets and stake your claim for a team place?

For further info, contact Zain on 07947 921 024 or email him at recruitment.kccc@gmail.com



JUST nine days to go until the annual Oxford versus Cambridge Universities Boat Race, which the organisers expect to attract 300,000 spectators lining the four-and-a-quarter-mile course along the Thames from Putney to Mortlake on the afternoon of Saturday, April 11.

The traditional men's boat race, sponsored by BNY Mellon, starts at 5.50pm but for the first time in its history it will be preceded by the women's race, backed by Newton Investment Management, at 4.50pm.

Both races will be televised live on BBC1, with host Clare Balding having recently declared that she has abandoned her usual gig at the Grand National (which takes place the same day) to lend her support to women's rowing.

There are countless prime locations along the race

route, notably the popular Putney embankment, while local watering holes will be vying for custom on the day.

Hammersmith & Fulham Council and the Boat Race organisers will once again be holding two special free 'Boat Race in the Park' events adjacent to the river – at Bishop's Park in Fulham (pictured left) and Furnival Gardens in Hammersmith from midday.

Bishop's Park will have a big screen, beer tents, food, family fun and live music. At Furnival Gardens visitors will be able to enjoy the same variety of food stands and beer tents, while situated at one of the most key points in the Race, watching the crews as they make their decisive moves under Hammersmith bridge.

Fulham FC are selling prime river view tickets and hospitality packages.

FOOTBALL FIXTURES

Friday, April 3

FULHAM v Brentford, 3.00.

Saturday, April 4

CHELSEA U18 v Middlesbrough U18

(League play-off game 3), 11.00.

CHELSEA v Stoke City, 5.30.

West Bromwich Albion v QPR, 3.00.

Monday, April 6

CHELSEA U21 v Tottenham Hotspur U21, 3.15.

Tuesday, April 7

Millwall U21 v QPR U21, 2.00.

Liverpool U21 v Fulham U21, 3.00.

Aston Villa v QPR, 7.45.

Charlton Athletic v Fulham, 7.45.

SPORT

Thursday, April 3rd, 2015

● SPORTS DESK: 07711 169 427

TERRY EARNS NEW CONTRACT

DIEGO Costa is fighting to be fit to face Stoke City at Stamford Bridge on Saturday evening as the Premier League programme resumes after the international break.

Costa, who has a long-standing hamstring problem, limped off during Chelsea's last league outing, a 3-2 win at Hull City, and missed Spain's last two matches.

Saturday may be too early for the Brazil-born hit man and most likely he will return for the following weekend's short trip across west London to QPR instead.

Replacement striker Loic Remy would replace Costa in a match Jose Mourinho's team needs to win after suffering two 1-1 draws in their most recent league home matches.

While many pundits are suggesting that the league title is already Chelsea's – Blues have a six-point lead over Manchester City and a game in hand – they do need to rediscover the form of champions.

● By LWN reporter **Paul Lagan**
sport@londonweeklynews.co.uk

Training at Cobham has been a lonely experience of late for Chelsea skipper John Terry, who, having retired from international duty, has had to train with a few remaining non-internationals and a group of development squad players.

But the lack of competitive action gave him time to sign a new one-year extension deal that will keep the 34-year-old at the Bridge until the end of the 2015-16 campaign.

Since his debut in 1998, JT has made 661 appearances, scoring 63 goals – a record for a Chelsea defender.

In that time he has won 13 top flight honours with the Blues – Champions League and Europa League medals, three Premier League titles, five FA Cups and three League Cups.



Droghda, John Terry and Petr Cech after the Capital One Cup final triumph Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

Terry said: "I'm delighted to have signed an extension to my contract with Chelsea.

"After recently adding another major trophy to my collection (the Capital One Cup), I hope myself, the players and manager can continue to bring success to our club.

"Playing for this great club makes me so proud. And as always, I would like to thank the fans who have continually supported me," added Terry, who has had 21 centre-back partners in his time.

They are (in alphabetical order): Alex, Tal Ben Haim, Winston Bogarde, Khalid Boulahrouz, Jeffrey Bruma, Gary Cahill, Ricardo Carvalho, Marcel Desailly, Michael Duberry, William Gallas, Jes Høgh, Robert Huth, Branislav Ivanovic, Tomas Kalashnikov, Joel Kitamirke, Bernard Lambourde, Frank Leboeuf, David Luiz, Michael Mancienne, Emerson Thome and Kurt Zouma.

Jose Mourinho said: "This new contract is not to say 'thank you very much', it is because John continues to perform. He is a top defender. I am happy that he completely deserves this new contract in a season where he has already played 40 matches."



This week at STAMFORD BRIDGE

While Terry goes on and on, one young player has left SW6 on loan. Nathan Ake has joined Reading – now managed by ex-Blue Steve Clarke – until April 22. A Dutch Under-21 international, Ake joined Chelsea in the summer of 2011 and has since made 11 appearances for the first team.

Chelsea stars shine across Europe

WITH international friendlies and Euro 2016 qualifiers dominating the scene, it's worth noting that Chelsea centre-back Gary Cahill took the captain's armband off Wayne Rooney when the Manchester United striker was substituted during the Three Lions' 4-0 victory over Lithuania at Wembley on Friday. Cahill is vice-captain and an increasing influence within the England camp.

LWN Sport went to press before England's friendly against Italy in Turin on Tuesday but Cahill was once again expected to occupy his customary centre-back position, winning his 34th cap in the process.

A number of Chelsea players were on the score sheet for their country across Europe last weekend.

Eden Hazard scored for Belgium in a 5-0 thrashing of Cyprus, with Thibaut Courtois rarely troubled between the sticks for the Belgians in Brussels.

Young central defender Kurt Zouma came on for the final eight minutes of France's 2-0 friendly defeat of Denmark in St Etienne on Sunday night in what was his first senior international appearance.

Cech to decide

Battling for a first team slot at the Bridge with Courtois is Petr Cech, who played the full game for group leaders Czech Republic, who were surprising held to a 1-1 draw against Latvia in Prague on Saturday.

Cech has revealed that he will make a decision on where he will ply his football trade next season. He is looking for regular first team football and will not be short of suitors, with Real Madrid and Arsenal expected to be looking for a top quality stopper in the summer.

At the other end of the career spectrum and first team level were a number of Chelsea youngsters showing what they can do.

England U19s featured young Blues defender Ola Aina (captain), Ruben Loftus-Cheek, Alex Kiwomya, Charlie Colkett and Izzy Brown in Saturday's 1-0 victory against Azerbaijan in Bayeux, France.

Former Pimlico Academy student Tammy Abraham continues to impress at club and international level, notching a couple of goals for the U18 national side, while his strike partner Dominic Solanke also hit the back of the net in Saturday's 6-1 thumping of Switzerland at Walsall.



Focus on Craven Cottage

Sure 'Betts' pays dividends

FULHAM goalkeeper Marcus Bettinelli kept a clean sheet on his England Under-21 debut, while Whites' striker Cauley Woodrow also started in the 1-0 friendly win in the Czech Republic last Friday.

Gareth Southgate's side made the breakthrough early in the second-half when Arsenal's Calum Chambers' cross wasn't dealt with by Czech goalkeeper Jiri Pavlenka and Tom Carroll converted the loose ball.

The Czechs, who will host the Euro U21 Championship this summer, put Bettinelli's goal under threat with a barrage of corners in the closing stages but the Fulham keeper's clean sheet remained intact to cap a memorable night for the 22-year-old.

Speaking to FATV after the match, 'Betts' said: "They sort of grew into the game, so we had to deal with that. They're a good side. We watched them in the week and did our analysis of them, so we knew what they're capable of.

"We had words in the changing room at half-time and said we needed to take it up a notch to get this win, and luckily enough that's what we did.

"I'm delighted with my debut. I waited a long



Marcus Bettinelli kept a clean sheet on his England debut

time for it and my priority now is to carry on playing and try to get on that plane (to the Czech Republic) in the summer."

FULHAM have signed two players from fellow Championship clubs on loan until the end of the season.

Midfielder Danny Guthrie (from Reading) and James Husband (Middlesbrough) will hope to make their debuts in this Friday's home game against local rivals Brentford.

Guthrie said: "Fulham have got something to play for. It's a good challenge and I'm really looking forward to it. Obviously the main objective is to be safe from relegation as soon as possible.

"Speaking to some of the staff, the squad is quite young, so if I can add experience and knowledge, then that will be great."

Guthrie, who took part in his first training session for Fulham on Friday, began his career at Liverpool before joining Newcastle United, for whom he scored a screamer at Craven Cottage in January 2012.

Husband is a 21-year-old left-back who can also operate further forward. He signed for Boro from Doncaster Rovers last summer. Fulham defender Fernando Amorebieta has gone the other way on loan as part of the Husband deal.

Tony McDonald